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PARTIDO AFRICANO DA INDEPENDENCIA DA GUINE E CABO VERDE

Speech delivered by the Secretary General of PAIGC, Amilcar Cabral, at the Symposium organized by the Democratic Party of Guinea (PDG) in memory of President Dr. Kwame Nkrumah.
(People's Palace of Conakry, May 13th 1972)

Second Edition
Second Printing

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Congress of Afrikan People and Jihad Productions, acknowledges their sincere revolutionary appreciation to The African Party for the Independence of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde Islands, and the Gov. of Guinea for their cooperation in the publication of **Cabral on Nkrumah.**

This speech by our Secretary General has been delivered in french on the basis of some notes written in portuguese. This is the translation of the taperecorded french text.

The Department of Information of PAIGC

After the speeches we have heard today and, particularly after the both militant and moving address given by our elder brother and comrade-in-arms, President Ahmed Sekou Toure, what is there left to say? But we must speak, for if at this point we remained silent our hearts might burst (applause).

Mr. President,

Gathered together here, near the mortal remains of President Kwame Nkrumah – one of the greatest figures of mankind in this century – we are living through a transcendental moment in the history of the fight for the freedom and progress of Africa. A transcendental moment in the whole of history, we could say.

We must therefore reflect deeply on this moment and draw from these events all the lessons they have to offer; as President Kwame Nkrumah would say, the positive lessons and the negative lessons.

Before saying a little of the feelings in my heart and the thoughts of my mind, I wish to greet all the delegates present here, and to remind them, on behalf of the liberation movements of Africa, that our gathering here together around the mortal remains of President Kwame Nkrumah, constitutes not only a mark of respect and consideration for his personality and his work but also a committment towards the total liberation of Africa and the progress of the African Peoples (applause).

Mr. President,

On behalf of the freedom fighters of our Party, who are the legitimate representatives of our People of Guinea and of the Cape Verde Islands, we wish to address our fraternal wishes of condolence to Madame Nkrumah, to all the Nkrumah family, to our President and

companion-in-arms, Ahmed Sekou Toure, who has always been a loyal comrade to President Nkrumah, to the People of Ghana and to the whole of Africa.

However, we should not let our tears drown the truth. We, freedom fighters, do not shed tears over the death of a man, not even over a man who has been an exemplary comrade-in-arms and revolutionary, for as President Ahmed Sekou Toure often states: What is a man next to the infinite and transcendental unfolding of the People's development and of mankind's progress? Nor do we cry for the People of Ghana, whose most beautiful achievements and legitimate aspirations were turned into a mockery. Nor are we weeping over the betrayal of Africa. Our tears, rather, are tears of hatred for those who were capable of betraying Nkrumah in the mercenary service of imperialism (applause).

But, comrades, betrayal like loyalty is a human trait. Betrayal in Ghana, as in the Congo and elsewhere in Africa, has a positive aspect: it reveals the real human dimension of the African man. And in this specific case, it affords a better understanding of the true stature of the political giant that Nkrumah was, and helps to immortalize him all the better.

Comrades, we have heard talk about Nkrumah being rehabilitated. We can only understand this expression in the context of diplomatic or tactical language because, as far as we freedom fighters are concerned, those who really have to rehabilitate themselves are those who betrayed Nkrumah by betraying the People of Ghana and Africa (applause).

Mr. President,

Africa has rehabilitated herself not only in her eyes but before history by making the people of Guinea the

spokesmen of her demand that Nkrumah be restored to his rightful place at the highest peak of the Kilimanjaro of the African Revolution; and as usual President Ahmed Sekou Toure faithfully interpreted the will of his people.

Mr. President,

We have heard much today about the action and the gigantic achievements accomplished by Nkrumah over a comparatively short period. President Nkrumah to whom we pay tribute was first of all the inspired strategist of the struggle against classic colonialism. He was the one who created "African Positivism", as we can term it, or "Positive Action" as he himself called it the best and the most adequate solution as regards the struggle in the context of British colonial domination.

We pay tribute to the pioneer of Pan Africanism, to the tireless and always inspired fighter for African Unity. We pay tribute to the avowed enemy of neo-colonialism in Africa and beyond, to the strategist of the economic development of his own country.

As far as neo-colonialism is concerned, it is now well known that Nkrumah's book *"Neo-Colonialism, The Last Stage of Imperialism"* conducts a searching and materialist analysis into reality, that terrible reality of Africa called neo-colonialism. Inspite of an outpour of criticism and slander by the enemies of Africa on the subject of the development of Ghana, inspite of certain rotten characters who would even claim to represent the African press, inspite of all the attacks pointing at Nkrumah's so-called economic failure, everybody now knows perfectly well that as of 1970 on the basis of all the economic steps taken by Nkrumah and his government, Ghana would have been at the peak of its development and would have shown the world that Africa is not only capable of winning political independence but of building economic independence as well (lengthy applause).

Mr. President,

We hail Nkrumah, the fighter for the freedom of the African People who was always forthcoming and fully committed in his support to the national liberation movements. And we, in Guinea and the Cape Verde Islands, wish to state here that although the most important external factor which determined the development of our struggle was the independence gained by the Republic of Guinea, thanks to the heroic NO delivered by its people on September 28, 1958, it is equally true that we launched our struggle strongly encouraged by the concrete support given by Ghana and particularly President Nkrumah (applause).

Mr. President,

We finally pay tribute to Nkrumah, the philosopher, the thinker. As President Sekou Toure has said, he was a philosopher and a thinker because of the consistent practice to which he applied himself.

We also pay tribute and honor to a personal friend, to a comrade who always knew how to encourage us in the difficult but exalting struggle we are waging against the particularly retrogressive system of Portuguese colonialism.

Mr. President,

We must remind ourselves at this time that all the coins of life have two sides. All realities have two aspects; the positive and the negative. To positive action, negative action has been and will always be opposed and vice versa. President Nkrumah will remain part of the history of Africa and the world because the sum total of his positive action is more than positive: it is the expression of his outstanding achievements, of his creative and fruitful practice in the service of the people of Africa and of Mankind.

We must however learn the lessons which events teach us and, even in these painful moments ask ourselves a few questions so that our understanding of the past, our experience of the present and our preparation for the future may be improved. For instance, which economic and political factors made it possible for betrayal to succeed in Ghana inspite of the personality, inspite of the courage, inspite of the positive action of Nkrumah?

Yes, imperialism is criminal and ruthless but we must not place the whole burden of blame on its broad back. For as the African people are known to say: "Rice only cooks inside the pot".

To what extent was the success of betrayal in Ghana linked or not to problems of class struggle, to contradictions in the social structure, to the role of the Party and of other institutions including the armed forces – all in the context of a newly independent state? We must ask ourselves to what extent the success of betrayal in Ghana was linked or not to the search for a correct definition of those historical makers of history – the People – and to their daily actions in defense of their own conquests during independence? Or to what extent might not the success of betrayal in Ghana be linked to the fundamental problem of the choice of men in the Revolution?

Meditation over such questions may perhaps lead us to a better understanding of the magnitude of Nkrumah's work, as well as the complexity of the problems he had to confront, so often alone. These problems will also undoubtedly lead us to the conclusion that as long as imperialism exists, *an independent state in Africa must be a liberation movement in power - or else it will not be.*

Mr. President,

President Nkrumah had a deep understanding of this truth and he was tireless in his emphasis of it during the long talks we had together both in Accra and here, in Conakry. It is enough to re-read his books to see that they are punctuated with preoccupations concerning these problems.

Mr. President,

There are truths we must tell one another at this moment, but it is even more important for us to tell to those who would wish to weep in crocodile-style over the mortal remains of Kwame Nkrumah (applause).

Mr. President,

The peoples of Africa and particularly the fighters for freedom are not to be duped. Nobody can come and tell us that Nkrumah died of a cancer of the throat or some other illness. No, Nkrumah was killed by the cancer of betrayal (applause) which we must uproot from Africa if we really want to bring about the final liquidation of imperialist domination on this continent. But we Africans firmly believe that the dead live on at our sides. Ours are societies of the living and the dead. Every dawn, Nkrumah will be born again in the hearts and will of the freedom fighters, in the actions of all true African patriots. The immortal spirit of Nkrumah will preside over the judgement of History regarding the decisive stage in the lives of our Peoples and in the life-and-death struggle against imperialist domination for the true progress of our continent.

We, liberation movements, will not forgive those who betrayed Nkrumah. The People of Ghana will not forgive. Africa will not forgive. Progressive mankind will not forgive (applause). Let those who still have to rehabilitate themselves in the eyes of Africa make haste to do so. It is not yet too late.

As an African adage says: "Those who dare to spit at the sky only dirty their own faces" (applause). Those who tried to tarnish the luminious personality of Kwame Nkrumah have now come to understand that the African People are right.

Another African proverb says that: "One hand, whatever its size, can never hide the sky". And so, Mr. President, those who have tried to discredit the grandiose achievements of Kwame Nkrumah must acknowledge today that this African proverb too is right.

Mr. President,

Before concluding, allow us – although I know we should not be doing so – to offer on behalf of our fighters and of all the freedom fighters of Africa, our fraternal and militant thanks to the People of the Republic of Guinea, to the Democratic Party of Guinea and to its beloved leader, President Ahmed Sekou Toure for yet another token of their unlimited courage. First of all by welcoming Kwame Nkrumah and by giving him his rightful place as Co-President of this Republic. And later by insisting and struggling so that the national funeral should be held here in Guinea, an African land which stands as the symbol of African liberation and dignity (lengthy applause).

Mr. President,

If a new understanding could be born between Guinea and Ghana during these painful moments of our lives, we would all be very happy and we would count it as yet another one of Kwame Nkrumah's important achievements (applause).

Mr. President.

The best tribute which we Africans could pay to Kwame Nkrumah and to his immortal memory, would be

to reinforce and develop the struggle, to intensify it and to bring about the total liberation of Africa. To succeed in the economic, social and cultural development and progress of our Peoples – as well as in the building of African unity. Such was the fundamental objective of the practice and thought of Kwame Nkrumah, such is the oath we should all take before History as regards our contribution to the African continent.

The most beautiful flowers we freedom fighters can offer to honor the memory of Kwame Nkrumah are the bullets, shells and various projectiles with which we are striking the colonialist and racist forces in Africa.

Mr. President,

We are sure, absolutely sure that surrounded by the eternal green of the African forests, flowers red as the blood of martyrs and yellow as the harvests of plenty will grow on the grave of Kwame Nkrumah, for Africa will win. (lengthy applause.)

Thank you, Mr. President.

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